

THE GREEN CALDRON

A Magazine of Freshman Writing



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Courtship, 1912

C. E. LEHMAN

Rhetoric II, Theme 12, 1947-48

MY FATHER LOVES TO REMINISCE, AND HIS REMINISCENCES, told in a hearty, ribald manner, have been the shot-in-the-arm for more than one party. One of his less censorable tales is of his courtship of my mother.

At that time, my mother was going to college in Waterloo, somewhat against her parent's wishes, while my father was running a photograph gallery that specialized in a post-card size picture that sold three for twenty-five cents. Having your picture taken, then, was quite a fad, and it was not uncommon to have pictures made many times a year. So it was inevitable that they should meet.

Father was already acquainted with an older sister of my mother's, and it was through her that he became acquainted with Mother. It seems that it was not proper for a girl to go alone to have her picture taken, so Mother went with her sister as a kind of chaperon, and to meet Father, who, in her sister's words, "was the best looking fellow, and such a snappy dresser."

So they met, and in spite of the fact that Father says Mother had a big fever blister on her lip, and Mother says he wasn't so much to look at, either, they were soon having dates. My father, who has had many ups and downs in life, at that moment was having an up; so they dined at the very best places, and saw all the road-shows of the day, "Sapho," "Lightnin'," Sousa's Band, and others I cannot recall. Mother, a farmer's daughter who had never been more than twenty-five miles away from home, was properly impressed by Father's worldly ways, his urbane manner, and the size of his purse, besides his charm and good looks, while he was thrilled with her freshness and lack of sophistication. They were soon head-over-heels in love.

At last, the time came when Father must meet the family of his love. Of course, the family were already aware that their daughter was in love, and were none too happy about it. To them, Father was a fly-by-night photographer with no family, no background, and no recommendations. So it was with some trepidation that, one Sunday morning, Father hired a rig, and he and Mother drove out to the farm. Father says that was "the longest God-damned day he ever put in," and I have no doubt but what it was. My mother had four brothers and five sisters, besides her mother, and they were all there, plus a goodly scattering of aunts, uncles, and in-laws. It was a terrible gauntlet to run, especially since the atmosphere, if not hostile, was not too friendly.

After a round of introductions, which must have been formidable, and the usual huge and stupefying Sunday dinner, at which little effort was made

to include this somewhat unwelcome guest in the conversation, poor Father was led to the front porch for a breather. However, he and Mother were hardly settled when Mother was called into the house, and poor Father was left alone and undefended. He was aching for a cigarette, but didn't dare light one, as cigarettes were still considered sinful west of Chicago, but at least he was alone for the moment and didn't have to endure the surreptitious glances, the coolish presence of his in-laws-to-be. Or so he thought. He had scarcely breathed a deep sigh of relief when one of the brothers appeared. Then followed a painful conversation between a man who knew nothing about farming and a man who knew nothing but farming. One by one, the male relatives, all farmers, "visited" with Father while Mother, heartless creature, left him high and dry. Thus passed the afternoon, with but one short break when Father caught a quick smoke in the privy, followed by a sen-sen to kill the tobacco odor on his breath. By five o'clock, Father, wet with nervous perspiration and exhausted from being scrutinized and interrogated by half the men in LaPorte County, was desperate. He finally cornered Mother long enough to say that they must leave for town immediately. This, of course, was unexpected, as there was still supper to be served, but somehow or other, between them, they made a fairly plausible excuse for their early departure, and were on their way back to Waterloo.

Alas, the verdict from home, when it came, was unfavorable. How could a man who dressed in the most extreme fashion, who knew nothing about farms or farming, who smoked cigarettes (someone had seen smoke coming out of the crescent moon in the privy door), and who was nothing but an itinerant photographer, ever amount to anything? He had been weighed and found wanting, and Mother was advised to drop her acquaintance with him unless she wanted to lead an unhappy, vagrant life. However, fortunately for me, my mother had considerable spunk, referred to in those days as German bull-headedness, and she continued to see Father in spite of family disapproval.

Of course, opposition only fanned the flame of their love, and eventually they eloped to Chicago, spent a glorious two weeks honeymooning there, and returned finally for a reluctant family blessing.

Dad always closes this tale with the statement, "Those were happy days," and although that sounds rather contradictory, I understand what he means. Courtship is so prosaic now-a-days. It is a foregone conclusion that children will marry whom they please, regardless of what their parents, who may not even be consulted, have to say. (Not very often, now, is there the thrill of going against your parents' wishes, the excitement of an elopement, the amusing, in retrospect, family scrutiny.) In streamlining our way of life, we have removed a lot of useless rules and conventions, it is true, but with them we have removed some of the zest, the pungency, that makes the good old days seem so desirable.

Utopia

WILLIAM REHM

Rhetoric I, Theme 10, 1947-48

ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT THINGS TO FIND IN THIS civilized world of ours is peace. By peace I mean a state of being where the only laws are natural laws, and the bustling, confused roar of ordinary city and university life is superseded by the knowledge that the earth will still be in its orbit if we wait until tomorrow to do the things that will wait for tomorrow. Of necessity such a state of being is not conducive to making one's living, but it is conducive to a very pleasant vacation. Such a vacation I once spent as a forest lookout in the Bitterroot Mountains.

The Bitterroots are the western upper foothills of the Rocky Mountains. As such, they are very high and beautiful. The topmost peaks may be as high as five thousand feet. A mile from many of these peaks the rivers from the melting snows of the Rockies have cut deep, wide valleys which are less than a thousand feet above sea level. In these valleys and on the sides of the peaks up to about five thousand feet rise some of the last stands of virgin white pine in this country. Because of the rough country and the intervention of the United States Forest Service, the stands are in the same condition as they were when the white man first entered this country. In the valleys the forest roof may be as much as one hundred and fifty feet. As the air becomes thinner and the wind stronger in the higher reaches, the trees become smaller until, at about the five thousand foot mark, the forest starts to break up into scrub fir and pine. The country is so wild and rough that the railroads, the Forest Service, and a few small lumber companies are the only industries. With so few people, the country is not split up by trails, and the game has yet to learn real fear of man. For one who wants peace, this is the Promised Land.

In 1944, when the war with Japan was approaching its peak, the western forests were drained of manpower. At that time the Japanese were sending over balloon bombs; the lumber companies were working twenty-four hours a day; and to top it all, the forests were as dry as tinder from the lack of rain. The Forest Service was frantic, because a big fire at that time would have disrupted the entire Northwest. So to swell their forces to where effective fire control was feasible, they were forced to call upon high school boys. I heard of this in the spring of 1944, wrote to the Forest Service, and in June was assigned to Avery Ranger Station at Avery, Idaho.

There were ten of us who reported to the station on June 15. For two weeks we worked clearing trails, setting telephone lines, and reconditioning lookouts for the coming fire season. At the end of the two weeks there were seven of us left. Three days of schooling on the theories of fire control and

lookout work completed our work at the ranger headquarters. We were then sent with an experienced lookout for one week of putting our theories into practice.

The oldtimer I was assigned to was called Jim. If he had a last name I never heard it. He was rather silent about his past. In town, he was a sloppy, bleary-eyed drunk with a hang-dog look in perpetually frightened eyes. Since the lookout we were going to was a full day's climb away, I didn't see how he was ever going to reach it, let alone how I was ever going to live with him for a full week. The morning that we started out, Jim wobbled into the station just as bleary-eyed as ever. At five-thirty we were a mile up the trail, and Jim was beginning to look like another man. By noon the man ahead of me, except for his white skin, looked like one of the old time French-Canadian guides that you see in the movies. His eyes were clear, his head up, his back straight, and he was hiking at a pace that was slowly killing me. When we reached the lookout that evening, I was so tired that I could hardly stagger, while Jim was just as frisky as his fifty-eight years would let him be. Without going into the details, let it suffice to say that the next week was the roughest that I have ever spent. A fifty-eight year old drunkard was working me off my feet.

The happiest day in my life was when I bade Jim a "fond farewell" and hiked the fifteen miles over to Gibson Tower, which was to be my home for the remainder of the summer. Gibson was a little twenty-by-twenty cheese box on the top of a thirty-foot tower, as were most of the other lookouts. A swinging stairway surmounted by a trap door that led onto the catwalk took up one side of the tower. From waist high up to the rafters, the house was windows. They were covered with heavy shutters in the winter to protect them from breakage; in the summer the shutters were swung up and served as shades to keep the lookout reasonably dim and cool. Inside at one end there was a bed that folded into the wall. Adjacent to it on one side there was a table, and on the other a cabinet that was supposed to be mouseproof but wasn't. On the far side were the stove, a wood-burning monster, and the shelves for canned goods. The middle of the floor was dominated by the alidade, a sight used for the triangulation of a fire. When kept clean, neat, and painted the hut was a real home.

The weeks that followed were so peaceful that I lost almost all sense of time. Look out the window twenty minutes in each hour, sleep, read, take pictures, shoot at a can on a stump, or else just sit and think were the only things to do. It was the time spent in just thinking that got me into the most trouble. On the next ridge there was a lookout with two fellows from Muncie, Indiana, in it. They were just as crazy as Hoosiers are supposed to be. So whenever I got lonely or they had a fight, which was quite often, we would call each other up on the telephone and spend hours just thinking out loud. One day we started talking about food, and more specifically, how roast

gopher and mashed potatoes with gopher gravy would taste. That day an idea was born. When the ranger came up on his annual inspection trip we would feed him a gopher dinner. On the morning of the day my outfit was to be inspected, the boys came over with two large gophers that they had just killed. We cleaned them and after a long argument on how they should be cooked, made them into a delicious meat stew with carrots, peas, and lots of potatoes. My two little Hoosier friends then withdrew to the attic, and I sat down to await the arrival of my friend, Mr. Higgins. In due time he arrived, I ushered him in with all due decorum, and after what my friends up in the attic described as hours we sat down to lunch. I must say the stew was delicious, though a little fat. In no time we had finished a very large pot of stew. After dinner Mr. Higgins asked me where I had got the meat, because he hadn't sent any veal up to the towers for a month. I showed him the drying gopher skins. He barely made the catwalk rail in time.

The thunder storms were the only things that broke the tranquility, other than an occasional fire or practical joke. The towers were wired with five-eighths inch copper lightning rods and ground wires; even so they were so exposed that lightning hit very close to them every time there was a big storm. One storm I remember especially started at eleven one evening and lasted until three the next morning. I could see the clouds rolling up all afternoon. By dinner time the sky was almost a solid layer of thunder-heads. When the last light started fading at about eight o'clock, the effect was eerie enough to give rows and rows of goose pimples. There was a dead silent calm. Nothing moved; nothing. The air was supercharged with electricity. It was as if the day of judgment had come. I watched the lightning—gigantic, soundless bolts—slowly creeping toward me. Twenty miles away, ten, five—now I could hear a faint, continuous roar of thunder. Now the little wind that precedes the storm sprang up, then ceased.

With a rifle crack and a roar the first bolt hit. The resistance fuse in my telephone cracked; the windows rattled; the tower creaked. I swung my alidade sight on the striking point of the bolt: horizontal 270 degrees—vertical 2,000 yards. Quickly enter it on the lightning chart. Crack, another one. Sight and enter it. Another, another, and another—all evening the lightning cracked and roared. Then, all of a sudden, there was silence, dead silence. I felt the hair on the back of my neck start to rise. A little scurrying in the corner, from a mouse frantically trying to get out of the tower. I flashed my light in the corner; the grounds on the lightning rods were buckling away from the wall. In a second I was on my bunk frantically reviewing all the ranger had told me about lightning. "The tower is grounded; your bunk is the safest place; lightning killed three men in this district five years ago." Lightning has killed, killed, killed! . . . Eons passed. I opened my eyes. There were stars out. The storm rumbled in the distance. The ground wires were sagging limply against the wall. The storm was over. I lay back and slept the sleep of the exhausted.

The next morning after I had checked on all of the strike spots, I climbed to the top of the tower and looked at the lightning rods. They were an inch shorter than they had been the day before.

The summer passed, day after day. Don't do today what can be done tomorrow; sleep, eat, look out the window and rest. Day after day the same procedure. Make life as simple as possible because this is Utopia.

Sukiyaki

WILLIAM E. LUCAS

Rhetoric Extension X101, June 1948

THE AFTERMATH OF THE LATE WAR HAS SENT AMERICANS into all the far corners of the earth. Everywhere they have gone they have brought back some strange new custom or food to enrich their lives. The occupation personnel in Japan have been no exception to this fact. In addition to the "futons," "tanzens," and "getas" which the Americans have adopted for their own use, they have also developed a taste for Sukiyaki.

Sukiyaki, pronounced "skee-yak-kee," is a combination of exotic oriental ingredients simmered in a small pan over a charcoal brazier. The variety of items in the dish changes with the seasons, but it usually consists of small thin slices of beef, bamboo sprouts, bean curd, onions, and green beans. Eel or chicken is often substituted for beef, but this does not find favor with Americans.

The cooking takes place after the guests are seated on cushions around the low table. A small charcoal brazier, or "hibachi," is placed in the center of the table and a shallow pan placed over the coals. The meat and vegetables are arranged in the pan and sprinkled with sugar and butter. Liberal quantities of soy sauce and—of all things—sake wine are poured into the pan, and the whole mixture is allowed to simmer slowly while the guests watch and listen to the soft bubbling. The most wonderful part of this process is the delightful aroma which arises from the pan to tantalize the waiting diners.

Sukiyaki must be eaten with chopsticks in order to enjoy the food in the manner of the true connoisseur. To eat this concoction with occidental knife and fork would be sacrilege equivalent to singing a hymn to the tempo of "Hey Bobba Ree Bop." Sukiyaki is prepared slowly and must be eaten slowly to savor the deliciousness of each ingredient. It is surprising to see how much more a person eats when Sukiyaki is served and chopsticks are used. The diners who eat in true Japanese style sitting on the floor will find they have only to stretch out to lie down and digest the meal in solid comfort.

The ancient Persian bard who sang of the delights of a loaf of bread and a jug of wine should have tasted Sukiyaki. The entire course of Persian literature might have been changed.

Why Not Federal Educational Subsidies for Non-Veterans?

ALEX C. POINSETT

Rhetoric II, Theme 8, 1947-48

TODAY THERE ARE STUDENTS IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES who are there not on the basis of their intellectual ability, but rather by virtue of the fact that they have the financial resources to expose themselves to a college education. There are also people outside of American universities who have the aptitude to enter but lack the necessary funds. We have taken for granted that we will have democratic education if we make clear that every citizen is entitled to it as a matter of right, and say that every citizen should have as much free education as every other citizen. But our assumption is false, since the amount of education the citizen acquires is proportional to the amount he can pay for. The problem is, what can be done for the impoverished individuals who deserve to be in college? Just as the G. I. Bill is providing education for veterans, a federal educational program could make the necessary provisions for qualified non-veterans to attend a higher institution of learning.

For fear that some may consider my proposal biased, let me say that I am a veteran, and federal educational subsidies for non-veterans would in no way affect me. Instead, my conviction stems from my belief that there are thousands of people who would be scholars if only they were given the opportunity to develop their intellects. Nothing better indicates that more people would go to college if they had the financial means than the results brought about by the G. I. Bill. According to John A. Perkins, author of "Higher Education and the State Government," fifty-seven per cent of the students in colleges by November, 1947, were veterans. In addition, the average veteran (who by the way might not have come to college otherwise) was proving his worth by making consistently better grades than his civilian classmates.

But why should we be concerned with making higher education available to more people? Thomas Jefferson once said, "The only safe deposit for the functions of government is in the hands of the people, and not there unless they are educated." An educated nation is more likely to succeed economically than one which has great resources but does not know what to do with them. A good example of that is the contrast that exists between China and the United States. In the former we have a country that is rich in natural resources but is economically underdeveloped because of a shortage of trained personnel to build up a vast industrial empire. In the latter we have a highly industrialized

society, because we not only have an abundance of natural resources, but in addition we have technicians who know how to gear these resources to our industrial machine. However, this is no cause for complacency, for the development of atomic energy is ushering in a new era of industrial progress. As a consequence, our nation is in need of more skilled technicians who are abreast of these new technological strides.

Yet education should be made available to more people, not just for the purpose of maintaining our industries, but also to bring about the production of better citizens, for the success of a democracy is dependent upon the ability of its adherents to make it work. An unintelligent population cannot put into practice such democratic principles as the equality of man, the subordination of government to the people, and the freedom of worship, expression, and conscience. On the other hand, a population that is thoroughly indoctrinated with these and other democratic principles is one that is conducive to the building of a democratic society. Lest this be construed to mean that the purpose of education is to spread democratic propaganda, let me say that a guide to better living is a major by-product of education.

Robert M. Hutchins, chancellor of the University of Chicago, says, " . . . Every European country has long since made provision that those who show themselves qualified through a rigorous system of competition shall receive aid which enables them to live as well as to pay their fees and which enables them to study as well as live." It does not necessarily follow that what works in Europe will work here, but here is a program that is worth a try. What we need is a national system of competitive scholarships providing awards large enough to enable the qualified student to study as well as to live. (We also need a system by which those students who are not qualified may be excluded from the university.) Just as the government supplied needy college students with financial aid under the National Youth Administration during the depression, it could also subsidize those who have the ability to go to college but cannot afford it.

Opponents of this proposal would say, "A government-sponsored civilian educational program would bring about a heavy debt for the taxpayers to meet." It should be pointed out that a government that can spend enormous sums of money on armaments can also allocate funds for a project from which the benefits it will derive will outweigh the short-term financial disadvantage the government will be put to.

There should be no excuse for a large segment of our national population's being ignorant of past and present developments in the world, since we take for granted that we are an enlightened nation. There also should be no excuse for the individual not being able to take his place in society because he has been denied a higher education. If finances are to be the barrier between the individual and a college education then the government should institute a program that will rectify this deficiency.

The Humbert Story

DONALD SHAVER

Rhetoric II, Theme 7, 1947-48

SHEER AUDACITY AND AN AIR OF DISARMING INNOCENCE spelled success for adventuress Therese Daurignac in her scheme for power and riches beyond belief. She outwitted the best financiers of France with a stupendous myth so unusual that its very strangeness inspired confidence and enabled her to rise from peasant girl to toast of Paris on a bubble of deception.¹

In the year 1877 Therese Daurignac came into possession of the will of an American, one R. H. Crawford, making her the sole heir to his fortune of twenty million dollars in securities. The reason for this magnificent gesture on the part of the multimillionaire was that Mlle. Daurignac had nursed him through a long and serious illness.

Not waiting for the estate to be settled, Therese began borrowing money against her inheritance and swung easily into the fashionable life of Paris. With the bachelor wealthy soon at her feet, she chose for her husband the distinguished son of an ex-Minister of Justice, M. Frederic Humbert.²

Two years later a sensation was created when the late Mr. Crawford's nephews, Robert and Henry Crawford, appeared in the probate court with an opposing will. This will, dated September 6, 1877, at Nice, France—precisely the same place, date, authority, and handwriting as appeared on Therese Humbert's will—left the Crawford millions to be divided equally among the two nephews and, oddly enough, Marie Daurignac, Therese's sister. Therese herself was to have only a small annuity. Mentioned also was Mr. Crawford's dying wish that one of his nephews should marry a Daurignac and thus unite the two families.³

The ensuing years were filled with long, stormy, highly intricate disputes in court over the case of the two wills, although the Crawfords and Humberts became the best of friends.⁴ In faithful compliance with their uncle's last wish, the two Crawfords vied in friendly competition for pretty Marie Daurignac's hand in marriage. Perhaps no other celebrity in history has been so close to marriage as many times as was Marie in her fifteen years of courtship, which in spite of its almost legendary color and ardour failed to end in marriage.⁵

It appeared that Therese Humbert had the upper hand in the courts as the first suits were decided in her favor. But the Crawfords were a litigious

¹ "Crawford-Humbert Millions," *Nation*, LXXIV (June 5, 1902), 439.

² *Ibid.* ³ *Ibid.*

⁴ "Two Adventuresses," *Nation*, LXXIX (December 5, 1904), 474-5.

⁵ "Crawford-Humbert Millions," *loc. cit.*

pair. They lost one suit only to file another, and still another, each one seemingly without a possibility of settlement. When it became evident that the fortune would not be awarded to either party in the near future, by writ of court it was notarized without inventory (at the time this was legal) and sealed in M. Humbert's safe until such time as its final disposition should be arbitrated.⁶ Even though the fortune was inaccessible to both parties to the dispute, the notarization thereof brought the fortune legally into being. It became sound collateral for the floating of loans.

It should not be assumed that during all this expensive legal action Therese and her husband were scraping together the last of their pennies to make ends meet. Quite the contrary was true. Bankers were only too willing to accept Therese's notes countersigned by Marie Daurignac (an alternate heir) made "payable at the conclusion of my actions-at-law."⁷ Using these "unquestionably valid" notes, the Humberts were able to borrow the staggering total of one hundred forty million dollars (700,000,000 francs) before the Crawford estate was settled!⁸ No wonder the Humberts became noted for their sumptuous residences and their extravagant parties and balls. At their command were all the luxuries that France could provide.⁹

At times, Therese's creditors became impatient for the redemption of her notes. Whenever their demands became pressing, a marriage between Marie Daurignac and one or the other Crawford nephews became imminent. Such a marriage would have effected a peaceful settlement of the long standing dispute, and the notes would then become immediately payable.¹⁰ Upon several occasions, then, the most insistent creditors were temporarily pacified by the impending marriage of Marie Daurignac.¹¹

Finally, after fifteen years of court proceedings, the entire Crawford fortune was awarded to Therese Humbert. But strangely enough, she exhibited no desire to claim her heritage. For another five years she left the fortune in her safe where it had been placed so long ago by the courts and continued to borrow money.¹²

Imagine, if you will, the attention and comment attracted by a safe containing the collateral for thirty million dollars in debts which were still outstanding¹³—a safe into which no eyes other than the Humberts' had gazed since the fortune in securities was placed there twenty years ago. Little by little, doubts grew to mistrust and mistrust to suspicion as Therese continued

⁶ "Two Adventuresses," *loc. cit.*

⁷ "Century's Greatest Swindle," *Outlook*, LXXI (June 7, 1902), 341.

⁸ "Last of the Humberts," *Nation*, LXXVII (September 10, 1903), 203

⁹ T. P. O'Connor, "Criminals I Have Known," *Harper's Weekly*, LVIII (January 10, 1914), 11.

¹⁰ Research fails to disclose just why such a marriage would have settled the dispute, but it seems obvious that it was a legal point on one of the two wills.

¹¹ "Crawford-Humbert Millions," *loc. cit.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ "Greatest Tragicomedy of High Finance," *World's Work*, VI (1903), 3947-8.

to refrain from possessing her heritage. For the first time in her long and colorful career Therese's integrity was openly challenged. M. Rousseau,¹⁴ who was to become France's next Prime Minister, pointed out how strange it was that an ambitious woman should be disinclined to claim so rich a prize as the Crawford fortune. And then, what of the Crawford nephews? Everyone had read of this fabulous pair spending evenings with the Humberts on numerous occasions, but was it not extraordinary that no outsiders were ever present at these affairs? Who had ever seen the Crawfords? Very few indeed.¹⁵

Once these implications were so plainly set forth, they could not long go without investigation. Therese's creditors could be stalled no longer. A search warrant was issued and the safe at last opened. A Shakespearean apparition could not have bespoken a more disastrous portent than did that which was now beheld. Instead of millions, there was one button, a few old coins, and some newspapers to tell of the tragic hoax. In one fell swoop a score of men were utterly ruined. Many took their lives. Firms became bankrupt. "The Republic itself appeared shaken to its very foundations."¹⁶

After an attempted flight, the Humberts were apprehended and brought to trial. The story of the swindle was swiftly unfolded. Had anyone ever ventured to look into the existence of the Crawford fortune, he would have found that from the beginning it was as non-existent as the Crawfords themselves. On the rare occasions when the "Crawford nephews" had to make an appearance, the parts were played by Emile and Romain Daurignac, Therese's brothers.¹⁷ The two wills, of course, were forged. The sham lawsuits that went on for fifteen years were merely delaying actions to prevent the showing of the alleged securities. Therese's father-in-law, the former Minister of Justice, probably helped in planning the fake lawsuits and other legal technicalities.¹⁸

By American standards the participants in this crime were given very light sentences. Therese and her husband received five years in prison; Emile and Romain Daurignac received two and three years respectively.¹⁹

¹⁴ "Century's Greatest Swindle," *loc. cit.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.* ¹⁶ O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁷ "Last of the Humberts," *loc. cit.* ¹⁸ "Crawford-Humbert Millions," *loc. cit.*

¹⁹ "Humberts Convicted," *Outlook*, LXXIV (August 29, 1903), 1014.

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Night in Honolulu

RICHARD HENRY

Rhetoric I, Theme 5, 1947-48

GALESBURG DIVISION

This was Honolulu, the city of romance. These were servicemen on liberty away from home—men who had spent lonely, long weeks at sea, or had been away from civilization much too long. They were men who had been living in a completely masculine world for months, or years. A few of them were new to this world, most had grown hardened to it. And now it was time to forget and have a good time.

In the late afternoon they begin to trickle into town and wander around. As the big red sun sinks below the buildings, more and more of them are coming. Some are talking, some laughing, some just sitting quietly on the buses. The sun sinks lower, the neon lights begin to flicker on, the bars and bright, tawdry penny arcades open their doors. The small honky-tonk streets of Honolulu become crowded with uniforms of crisp white and khaki.

From the Royal Hawaiian to Sad Sam's the saloons are full and the men begin to drink. They sit at the bamboo tables or they stand at the bar. The fog of cigarette smoke grows heavy and the juke boxes play continuously. Tired, bored, and wan-looking waitresses bounce rapidly from table to table. One sailor makes a pass at a blonde and she parries expertly. She bawls the sailor out and his shipmates lean back on their chairs and guffaw loudly. Another man slaps a passing waitress on the backside, and she grins.

The M. P.'s and S. P.'s begin to patrol their beats in pairs. Staff cars prowl the streets, now flooded with servicemen. The evening is nearly in full swing.

A hawker is standing outside an arcade in his shirtsleeves. "Come on in and get yer pitcher taken fer only a quarter! Hey, soldier, pose with the little Hawaiian girl in da grass skirt fer only a quarter!" His raucous voice sings the lines over and over. From inside the arcade comes the smell of beer, and sweat, and heavy perfume.

The door of a saloon flies open and two waiters rush a bleary-eyed sailor out into the street. He curses loudly as the S. P.'s heave him into the wagon. Over on the corner two soldiers suddenly begin to swing at each other. They stagger and fumble but keep hitting each other violently. Blood spurts from one man's face. His buddy steps out from the crowd and hustles him away before the police arrive. A few blocks away a crowd has formed. Inside the ring of spectators one M. P. is twisting a man's arm. The man is standing quietly now and staring ahead defiantly. The second M. P. is kneeling on a struggling marine's stomach. He is holding the marine's throat in one hand;

in his other upraised hand he clutches his night stick. Both men are straining violently, making the muscles in their necks and arms stand out. The upraised hand with the club in it is poised and trembling like a leopard ready to spring. Suddenly the club descends swiftly upon the marine's head, and he relaxes with a great sigh.

All night the men drink and laugh and fight. Tomorrow is something far away. Tonight is liberty. Some girls curse these men, some laugh at them, and some grin. The patrol wagons scream down the streets. Night time in Honolulu rages on.

Sportsman's Inn---Last of the Old-Fashioned Saloons

HUGH F. HOUGH

Rhetoric I, Theme 10, 1947-48

THE RATE AT WHICH THE OLD-FASHIONED SALOON HAS recently disappeared from sight is most alarming to lovers of true Americana, for the pre-prohibition saloon had an individuality that no amount of chrome, murals, and indirect lighting can replace in the present-day thirst emporium. One of the few remaining places that has preserved this old time atmosphere, despite the vicissitudes of time and the Volstead Act, is Sportsman's Inn, a tavern in Sandwich, Illinois.

Located on Sandwich's Main Street, Sportsman's Inn, or the "Board of Trade" as many of the habitués refer to it, is like a page out of the past. A solid mahogany bar, well over half a century old, stretches down the greater share of the establishment's sixty foot length. There are no chairs or stools at this bar, but a well-worn brass rail affords the patrons a foot rest. Five card tables line the opposite wall and are in use much of the time. Rummy, pinochle, euchre, and cribbage are the games that have been played most often through the long history of Sportsman's Inn, but recently two newcomers, rabbit and ten-down, have enjoyed a wave of popularity. Because a city ordinance prohibits open gambling, these games are played for tokens that may be traded for drinks, candy, and tobacco. While no money passes over the tables, those players with a yen for more action often "saw" for small sums that are settled on the side.

The name "Board of Trade" probably fits this busy tavern better than any of the several others that it has had during its long existence. On rainy days and in the evenings the local farmers meet there to discuss prices and crops, and posters on the walls advertise farm sales and auctions that are to

take place. Business men drop in for a bottle of beer and a chat with their customers after closing shop, and a great many workers stop when their day's work is over. The "Board of Trade" is principally a working man's spa, and for this reason the owners have kept its old-fashioned trappings intact. It is a place where the average man can feel at ease in his grimy work clothes or in his best Sunday suit. While the Inn has more than its share of the town's questionable characters in regular attendance, it is seldom that a drunk is seen there. This is due to the explicit orders given the bartenders to "shut off" anyone who appears to be imbibing too freely.

In keeping with the old saloon tradition, women are conspicuous by their absence in the Board of Trade. Thus, the conversation is freer than in mixed company, and often it is spiced with terms and stories that might otherwise be lost to posterity. Further evidence of the limited clientele among the fairer sex is the single restroom in the rear marked "Gents."

The Board of Trade has not retained this air of the nickel beer and free lunch days without a struggle, however. Throughout the prohibition fiasco, nothing stronger than Coca-Cola passed over the aged mahogany, but the swinging doors kept swinging. During the recent war Sportsman's owners succumbed to the moral element in Sandwich to the extent of closing on Sunday mornings for the first time. Now it is closed during the whole Sabbath day. Another threat to tradition was the coat of light blue paint that the interior received two years ago. But these minor setbacks have been taken in stride by the Old Guard that frequents the place. Their greatest fear is that the next blow may be a door marked "Ladies" back by the one painted "Gents" in this last male stronghold.

Approach to Tahiti

The still, warm air was cooled periodically by a gentle ocean breeze as we slowly, tensely approached the island. The sea was beautiful, tossing and churning lazily about, and the swells rose and fell in perfect rhythm, breaking off at the top to form very picturesque white caps. The dark blue color of the water contrasted with the pale blue, cloudless sky, and I moodily watched the colorful display the water presented. Gulls flew overhead in a never ending stream, squeaking wildly at each other, waiting for the cook to dump left-overs from the galley. Diving accurately downward, the gulls plunged savagely upon the scattered offerings which spotted the surface of the vast South Pacific.

—ERNEST L. DONOHO.

Just Words

Disaster, calamity, destruction, slaughter, horror—it's amazing indeed when one picks up the daily paper and fails to find at least one of those words. Ugly words those words whose significance is almost lost in their unceasing barrage on our eyes and ears. "Men cry 'peace, peace', but there is no peace." In our headlong plunge into the bright new world of tomorrow, we somehow have passed up the little fellow; we remember him only when we see headlines, "Disaster-Calamity"—or maybe when we find ourselves weeping over someone we love.—JOHN S. MORRIS.

My Model T

DEAN A. SMITH

Rhetoric I, Theme 10, 1947-48

"TURN HER OVER AGAIN. SHE'S BOUND TO START THIS time." Turn her over, he says. I'd like to turn her over, right to the junk yard. Then suddenly, with a wheeze, a cough, and the deafening roar of a mighty motor, she starts and immediately becomes the best damn Ford Henry ever built. That's my Model T. I don't know why my Model T was superior to any other car; she just was. I could tell it the first time I saw her.

I found my Model T sitting alone and forgotten in an old barn miles from the nearest town. She was covered with cobwebs, and the hornets had been using her for a home. All four wheels had sunk deep into the dirt floor, so that her rusty frame nearly touched the ground. No one could remember exactly how long she'd been sitting there, but the last time Old Man Woods had her out was in the summer of '32 when he went to a funeral down South somewhere. Old Man Woods is dead now, and the only person I knew from whom I could buy the Model T was his widow, who lived all alone in a small house on the edge of town. When I confronted her with the question, she said that she would have to write her son out in California about it. After days of waiting she received her answer and told me she would sell the old Ford for twenty-five dollars. I bought it.

Never having owned a car before, I had no idea of the many problems that would arise. I knew how to drive, and I thought that all one would have to do was just get in and drive off. Not so with a Model T. In the first place, my Model T didn't have a starter, or at least not a mechanical one. It did, however, have a crank. I suppose everyone has heard stories about how a Model T will "kick" when it is being cranked and break the cranker's arm. Well, those stories are all true. A Model T is really a very sensitive machine, and when offended she sometimes becomes a trifle violent. This fact brought about many methods of starting these old Fords, but mine had a formula all its own. It was a particularly difficult one, and on most occasions my Ford had to be coaxed into starting. This was done by turning on the key, pushing up the spark, and vigorously turning the crank. Once the motor started I raced around to the driver's side, pulled down the spark, and got in. There I would push one of the pedals on the floor-board, depending on which way I wanted to go, and drive away.

Contrary to public opinion, these old Fords consumed or leaked tremendous quantities of gas and oil. Since oil was the more expensive of the two, I went around to all the filling stations and collected all the used oil they had drained

out of other cars. The economy of this type of oil was fine, but the lubricating power was poor. After about a week of my using this "high grade oil," my Model T developed a few knocks. I took her to several garages, but all that they said was, "Get that wreck out of here." My old Ford finally became so bad that I had to work on her myself. Fortunately this was the summer the W. P. A. was putting an alley through our block, and in no time at all I had plenty of help. The extent of the help was limited, however, to supervision only; they would sit around under a tree and direct me as I lay under my dripping Ford. Almost everyone in town came along at one time or another to give me words of advice, but about the only thing I accomplished was to kill the grass in the back yard with the oil and grease I spilled. When my neighborhood and I put my old lizzie back together again, they said that she ran like a new one; but I thought she made a lot of strange, new noises.

I don't believe my Model T had an innate knack for turning a pleasant motor trip into a hike, but once in a while she developed one. On Sunday afternoons when it didn't look like rain, I would pack my old Ford with boys, and we would take off for parts unknown. We would always venture from the main road deep into the country where the wooded hills and the twisting road made every turn a thrill, especially at twenty-five miles an hour. On the main highways the Model T was the slowest car on the road, and the farther she went the slower she got. Everyone could pass her. But once she got her tires on a good old dirt road, the life returned to her cylinders, and once again she became the queen of the road. She would roar down the hills, through fields, across creeks and never give a hint that she was tired. She did have a little trouble going up hills, especially steep ones. This was due to the band system she possessed instead of gears. When the low band became worn, the only one left was reverse, and it was usually pretty good. The thing to do then was to back up the hill. Everyone would pile out and guide me as I cautiously backed up the narrow and rutty road. These roads were seldom used, so we had little interference from other cars. If one did show up, we would keep him behind us and then go tearing along at top speed, showering him with dust. That would teach him to use our roads. We always tried to be home before dark because it seemed that the brightness of the lights was directly proportionate to the speed of the Ford. Since we could go no other way than slow, the lights were always rather dim.

Having nothing better to do one day, I painted my Model T. You'd be surprised how much orange paint added to this already wonderful car. It really didn't cost much to paint her either, since I only spent thirty-five cents for some paint and a brush. My Model T didn't have a top, so there wasn't much to paint, but as it turned out it really didn't matter what color she was.

It all ended with the scrap drive at our high school. The object of that was to go out after school and collect as much junk as possible and pile it on the lawn in front of the school. One night, while I was carefully decoyed into a show, my pals slipped into our garage and rolled out my Model T. The

next morning as I walked to school (I didn't drive because it was only a block and a half from home) I was surprised to see all the fellows out in front of the school laughing, and what's more, they seemed to be laughing at me. Stepping into the school yard I saw the joke, for there sat my Model T, orange and beautiful, covered with junk until nearly all that was visible was the radiator cap. The principal of the school thought it was quite nice of me to donate my car to the cause, and he told me he would give me seven dollars and a half worth of defense stamps for her if I turned her in for junk. I knew my answer, but my father thought that was where she should be—in the junk. Well, I left her there and finally they took her away, but if anyone ever asks me about her, I'll be glad to tell them that she was the best damn Ford Henry ever built—my Model T.

Doubt Gets You an Education

JAMES F. GRANT

Rhetoric 102 Proficiency Exam—1948

WHEN A PERSON IS ATTEMPTING TO ABSORB AN EDUCATION, he should have faith in the things propounded to him by his instructor, but for his own good and the increase of his knowledge he should reserve a particle of doubt. It is all very well to take what is offered, but to really gain insight into a subject there have to be doubts in the mind and independent research to verify or discourage those doubts.

In the universities of today very few instructors have the time to delve as deeply into all the aspects of a certain idea as they would wish to. For a student to really acquire a comprehensive knowledge, he has to take some of the instructor's words with a grain of salt and endeavor to find out for himself just what it is that doesn't ring true.

If, during the entire history of mankind, people had continued to believe fully the teachings and precepts of those who had gone before them, the world would still be at the intellectual level of the Stone Age. All of the world's great thinkers in every field have been led on in their search for new knowledge by doubting some facet of the teachings of earlier scholars.

A complete education of any sort cannot be acquired by unequivocal acceptance of age-old tenets in perfect faith. The same principle applies not only to formal education but to many things in the life of an average individual. "Believe nothing you hear, and only half of what you see," sounds perhaps a little exaggerated, but it really is an excellent idea.

If a person develops the habit of regarding with a bit of skepticism things which are represented to him as verities, that person will acquire a more complete and well-rounded education than the one who blindly accepts everything told to him. To be skeptical and to attempt to verify those skepticisms is to be a better educated man.

The Bahai Faith: Its History and Principles

JEAN MARGOLES

Rhetoric II, Theme 13, 1947-48

THE CHAOTIC STATE OF THE MODERN WORLD HAS brought disillusionment to many people. The machinery of civilization seems to be working toward destruction rather than progress. Nations, religions, and classes are battling each other, and cooperation seems to be a mere pipe dream. During the past century of confusion, a relatively unpublicized religious movement which claims to hold the answers to the problems of the world has been slowly gaining power. Known as the Bahai Faith, it claims to be a divine revelation; its adherents are people from innumerable classes and cultures who believe that the hope of the world lies in the acceptance and practice of a modernized religion.

The Bahai Faith sets forth the principle that religion, in order to be effective, must change as civilization changes. It accepts the divinity of the ancient revelations and utilizes the teachings of the prophets of all the great religions. To these, Bahaism adds the teaching of its recent prophet, Baha'u'llah, to whom it credits divine revelation. The modern viewpoint of the Faith is that future revelations will take place as the need arises, that religion will continue to change.¹

The movement began in Persia in 1844, with the rise of a teacher known as The Bab. At the age of twenty-five, The Bab advanced the claim of being the Herald of a greater teacher who was yet to come. The Bab said that the mission of the Messiah would be the establishment of a universal religion, the brotherhood of man, and universal peace. He spread his teachings throughout the East for six years, and at the end of this time, thousands were awaiting the arrival of the great prophet promised to them. However, the Persian priests and noblemen were terrified by the growing strength of The Bab. They conspired together and instituted a reign of terror culminated by the death of The Bab in 1850. Twenty thousand followers were put to death with barbarous cruelty, martyrs to the cause.²

In 1863, shortly after the martyrdom of The Bab, the promised teacher appeared. He was a Persian nobleman known as Baha'u'llah, or "The Glory of God." He announced his mission after he and a group of followers had been banished for their persistence in practicing their religion. He traveled

¹ Shoghi Effendi, *The Faith of Baha'u'llah* (Wilmette, Ill., 1947), p. 1.

² Charles Mason Remey, *The Bahai Movement* (Washington, D. C., 1912), p. 5.

from one Moslem country to another, continually harassed by religious persecution. Finally, Baha'u'llah, his family, and a number of followers were imprisoned in the Turkish penal colony of Akka. The group suffered greatly at the hands of Oriental monarchs, but the restrictions imposed on them were gradually relaxed. "His teaching brought freedom of thought and enlightenment to all peoples who heard it."³ During his imprisonment, he continued to send forth his teachings all over the world. He formulated the laws and ordinances of the Faith, expounded its principles, and proclaimed his message to the rulers of both the East and the West. After having completed his mission, he died in 1892.⁴

Baha'u'llah's eldest son, Abbas Effendi, known as Abdul Baha, was appointed by him as his lawful successor and the authorized interpreter of his teachings. Since early childhood, Abdul Baha had been closely associated with his father. He had voluntarily shared Baha'u'llah's exile, and he remained a prisoner until 1908, when he was released as a result of the Young Turk Revolution. Immediately following his release, he made a three year trip to Egypt, Europe, and North America. On this trip he spoke before vast audiences, telling about the teachings of Baha'u'llah and winning friends to the Faith wherever he went. He returned home to Palestine and remained there until he died in 1921.⁵

"Through his unique devotion, purity of life, tireless effort, and unfailing wisdom, the Bahai mesage slowly but surely penetrated to all parts of the world."⁶

The thousands of martyrs who died for the Bahai Cause had a great deal of faith in the aims and purposes of their religion. The Bahai Faith has passed through the preliminary stages of persecution and public apathy, and it deserves intelligent appraisal. Bahaism has a fundamental purpose in revealing the essential oneness of religions. The basic principles of all religions are harmonious, and their teachings illustrate the same truths. They differ only in non-essential aspects. Moreover, the foundation of a universal religion would be the foundation of inter-religious, inter-racial, and international brotherhood. It is a practical basis of unity, and one which the world needs. "The aim of Baha'u'llah . . . is not to destroy but to fulfill the revelations of the past, to reconcile rather than accentuate the divergencies of the conflicting creeds which disrupt present day society."⁷

Not only are the aims of Bahaism unique in the history of religion, but also the teachings extend beyond former limits. The society, as well as the individual, is provided with maxims by which it must be regulated. "The Bahai teaching has what may be termed three moralities. It has, first, a personal morality, then, a morality for institutions, and last of all a morality for society as a whole. . . ."⁸

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Effendi, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁶ *The World Faith of Baha'u'llah* (Wilmette, Ill., 1944), p. 6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁸ Horace Holley, *The Modern Social Religion* (London & Toronto, 1913), p. 190.

In regard to teachings for the individual, the faith holds that each man and woman constitutes a divine creation and a potential worth which no other individual has the right to deny. Self-expression is an obligation and a privilege of which every person may take advantage by means of noble conduct, great thoughts, or inspiring art. In addition, the ability to recognize good qualities and possibilities in everyone is the mark of a great spirit. The main purpose of each person's life should be spiritual development of his individual self. Thus, the immortality of the soul and the realization that body and mind are merely environmental agencies to the soul form the foundation of Bahai theology. In line with this idea, health and education are important and should be sought by everyone because they affect the soul's usefulness and power of development. In regard to materialism, an individual conscious of his soul will use his resources for public service and feel concern for his material possessions that they may be used in a correct way. Egoism is changed into service, and man's power runs along unselfish channels. Furthermore, no man must hold prejudice against or despise another, because all are created equal before God. In his relationship to society, man must be unselfish, constructive, and useful. Not withdrawing from his present religious organization, we must try to revitalize his religion by bringing it to realize the importance of change and evolution in religion. As a citizen, he must obey the laws of his country whether they are right or wrong, always trying, however, to extend social consciousness until the whole world is included.⁹

Bahatism teaches that enlightened self-interest is the foundation of social ethics as well as personal morality. The moral problem of the institution is dealt with in full. The prosperity and permanence of any religious or political organization is not the end for our personal loyalty. Instead, the cause of humanity demands our devoted loyalty. Therefore, only so far as institutions serve men and women do we owe them anything.¹⁰

The code of ethics already formulated by society is transcended by the Bahai teaching. Bahatism offers, fully developed, a universal social consciousness in which a new social morality can develop, overstepping old lines of Church and State. It is a world-deep and race-wide consciousness in which cooperation displaces competition. Every nation, race, and religion is brought within the wide circumference of complete social consciousness. Peace is insured by the establishment of an all-powerful international government; freedom from want is insured by regulation of economy.¹¹

In formulating its own administrative order, the Bahai Faith attempts to live up to the teaching which it expounds. The foundations of the administrative order are now being laid by local and national councils which are elected by the members of the Faith. In the future, a World Council will be

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 191-195.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 196-198.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-206.

formed which will be called the Universal House of Justice. In conjunction with Shoghi Effendi, the present spiritual leader, this council will coordinate and direct the affairs of the Bahai community. Its permanent seat will be in the Holy Land, near the resting places of its founders.

The administrative order, divine in origin, rests on the laws and ordinances which Baha'u'llah laid down, and functions in accordance with the holy scriptures of the religion. One of its most important points is the establishment of Bahai Temples in each community. In addition to being places of worship, these Temples must also have a School for Orphans, a College for the Higher Arts, a Hospital, and a Home for the Cripples. Although the administrative order has been attacked from time to time, it has remained vigorous and has succeeded in maintaining the unity of the widely scattered groups of adherents, enabling them to initiate enterprises throughout the world for the purpose of extension and consolidation.¹²

The establishment of these Bahai communities is a way of saying that the past, with its local hatreds, prejudices, and distrust, is gone. Bahaism can be regarded in no other light than as a world religion which is working for the birth of a world-encompassing civilization. In the words of Shoghi Effendi, "National rivalries, hatreds, and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding, and cooperation. The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated."¹³

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¹² Effendi, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

¹³ *Faith for Freedom*, p. 9.

Amerika

ROSALYN SALTZ

Rhetoric II, Theme 4, Summer, 1948

FRANZ KAFKA'S *AMÉRIKA* HAS INSPIRED AN AVALANCHE of brilliant literary criticism. Psychoanalytical, religious, and various other types of interpretations have been eagerly offered to explain the meaning of this fantasy which Kafka has created. It is questionable, however, whether any systematic interpretation, except in a very general way, could apply to this novel. It is doubtful that Karl Rossman's improbable adventures in a strange and mythical America could have been the result of any completely planned intellectual symbolism. The haunting, dream-like quality of the novel as a whole suggests, instead, a deeply emotional impressionism. Possibly, Kafka himself understood only in a vague way exactly what he was attempting to represent.

Although no intricate and reasoned philosophy of life is discernible in Kafka's *Amerika*, a vague, central, mystic theme pervades and governs the entire story—the theme of man's helplessness in shaping his own destiny. Karl Rossman, the immigrant boy, struggles valiantly to better his position, but he is cast down in every instance by forces which he is powerless to fight. This is most clearly seen in his adventure as a lift-boy in a hotel, where in spite of the benevolent aid of the managress and his own conscientious efforts to advance, he is discharged in disgrace. Even when he seems to find his permanent place, in the limitless "Theatre of Oklahoma," the theme of a higher law governing his destiny is evident. The "Theatre of Oklahoma" is a well-ordered organization with firm provisions for every conceivable type of activity. It does not expect people to come to it for employment, but with tremendous recruiting drives goes to seek employees.

More obscure, yet persistent, is a subordinate theme involving punishment for an unknown crime, perhaps the crime of attempted independence from the higher law of fate. For example, Karl Rossman is cast out by his sick uncle when he unknowingly acts against the uncle's unspoken wishes. Later, two ruffians whom he has befriended enslave him within the tenement room they occupy with their fat and lazy mistress. He must serve every whim of the disgusting woman and her two admirers. It is possible that only through this complete degradation and surrender could Kafka allow his hero to understand his complete helplessness and be properly punished for the crime of not recognizing earlier the inexorable law of fate. Whether or not this is the explanation, Karl Rossman is allowed to end his adventures on the threshold of a new and more hopeful life—the great "Theatre of Oklahoma" enfolds him within its strict but pleasant organization.

Apart from the mystical theme itself, *Amerika* is an intriguing and absorbing novel because of the way it has been written. Kafka, who never left the continent of Europe, carefully describes an America with huge castles in the suburbs of New York, with rustic inns and gardens along the highway, and with the Statue of Liberty holding an upraised sword. The very inaccuracy of the description adds freshness and charm to Karl Rossman's adventures and at the same time aids in the construction of the fantasy. Although the theme is somber, the settings, adventures, characters, and dialogue in *Amerika* are humorously and matter-of-factly described in a manner that reminds one of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. Because of Kafka's delightful style, it is not necessary to ponder over his symbolism in order to enjoy the book. But any interested reader is at liberty to read into the various situations those symbolic messages to which he is most responsive.

Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House

BOB WILBERT

Rhetoric II, Theme 12, 1947-48

ERIC HODGINS HAS WRITTEN A COMPLETELY AMUSING bit of satire, *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*. The book, which developed from a short story in *Fortune* magazine, is the story of the Blandings, who, tiring of the city, began to dream of country air, chickens, and the carefree life. With their decision to buy and remodel an ancient farm house, Mr. and Mrs. Blandings become veritable sheep among a wolf-pack of architects, contractors, and real-estate men. Their dream of a twenty-thousand dollar home ("ten-thousand for the house and ten-thousand for remodelling") rapidly became obvious to them for what it was—a dream. The Blandings soon found that their romantic old farmhouse was in reality a leech of sorts, sucking the money from their pocketbook. The house was not even fit for remodelling and had to be demolished.

With the final crash of the last supporting timber, Mr. Blandings learned that he had obliterated a relic of history at a cost to himself of \$9,525 and had nothing but a bit of unproductive farm land to represent his once fond dream. There remained nothing for the Blandings to do but to build a new home on their thirty-five-acre dud. The author toys with the creation of the Blandings' dream house, plummeting the couple from one catastrophic situation to another, allowing them temporary rest only at the end of his tale.

Mr. Hodgins is primarily a factual writer, the author of *Fortune* exposés and books of "scientific popularization." The Blandings book reveals a new

forte, attesting to the fact that the Hodgins way with words should not be squandered on less creative reporting. If you have ever bargained with a street vendor or hidden the desire for a bargain in a used-book shop under blasé affectations, you will appreciate through kinship the unconcern of the Blandings on the first encounter with their dream house and its country-slicker salesman.

"On a clear day you can see the Catskills," said the real-estate man. Mr. and Mrs. Blandings were not such fools as to exclaim at this revelation. Mrs. Blandings flicked a glove in which a cobweb and free-running spider had become entangled; Mr. Blandings, his lips pursed and his eyes half closed, was a picture of controlled reserve; strong, realistic, poised. By the way the two of them said "Uh-huh?" with a rising inflection in perfect unison, the real-estate man knew that his sale was made. . . . He computed five per cent of \$10,275 in his head and turned to the chimney footing.

"You'd have to do a little pointing up here," he said, indicating a compact but disorderly pile of stone in which a blackened hollow suggested a fireplace which had been in good working order at the time of the Treaty of Ghent. Mrs. Blandings, looking at the rubble, saw instead the kitchen of the Wayside Inn: a distaff plump with flax lying idly on the polished hearth; a tempered scale of copper pans and skillets pegged to hang heads downward near the oven wall; a boot-jack in the corner and a shoat glistening on the spit.

What Mr. Blandings saw broke through into speech. "With a flagstone floor in here it'd be a nice place for a beer party on Saturday night. You could put the keg right over in that corner."

He laughed a mild laugh which meant to say that if his thought was frivolous so, indeed, was the whole occasion that had called it forth. The notion that he might buy this old farm-house, or any other, anywhere, ever, was light, gossamer nonsense; a whimsy; a caprice; it was his pleasure to give it a momentary fiction of solidity.

The real-estate man refused to take Mr. Blandings' suggestion so lightly. "You could at that," he said, awe and rumination mixed in his voice, as though he had just heard a brilliant restatement of nuclear theory. He quickly did five per cent of \$11,550 in his head; aloud he said: "You haven't seen what's on the other side, either."

Accompanying the book are illustrations by cartoon-satirist William Steig, whose drawings are in perfect harmony with the naiveté of the Blandings adventure. Technically fine, the book is well-organized and shows well the uncanny timing the author possesses. Hodgins seems to know exactly how long he may play with a situation without tiring the reader. The author's style can be compared with that of Robert Benchley or E. B. White, though the comparison is slight, for the charm in the writing lies in word-choice rather than in utility of the comic situation. The author's keen sense for the humor in the human responses causes a laugh and a chuckle for every brick amassed as "Mr. Blandings builds his dream house."

How to Learn a Foreign Language

IVO HERZER

Rhetoric 101 Proficiency, 1948-49

WHEN YOU DECIDE TO LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE you may choose two approaches: first, by trying to build up your knowledge, vocabulary and speaking ability much in the same way as children do, that is by starting from the simple and common words, disregarding grammar; second, by trying to tackle this task as an intelligent adult, which means that you should endeavor to obtain a comprehensive picture, a general idea of the whole language, in as short a time as possible. The procedure in the second method, (which I believe is the more successful one) is as follows:

Get the shortest grammar-book you can find and by all means go through it in not more than seven days. Do not study it. Disregard irregular verbs, nouns, and the like. Try to grasp the idea of the language by memorizing such points as auxiliary verbs, articles, plurals, simple verb forms, and any peculiar rules or forms you may perceive.

Your next step would be to take a more detailed grammar-book with some exercises. You should also get hold of some newspaper, listen to the spoken language and try to create, so to say, a linguistic environment. That means that you would write the more difficult words in big, block letters on a piece of paper and have that paper always handy; let it be near your bed so you will see the words before going to sleep and on getting up. Meanwhile, your knowledge of grammar will become wider, and you will be able to take still another grammar-book. Do not study a grammar until you know it "by heart." Pass to another book, because thus you will repel that greatest enemy of studies—boredom. Get rid of books with sentences like: "Mary likes Tom. Who likes Tom?" Read advertisements and cartoons instead, even if it may require a more extensive use of your dictionary.

You must never forget, however, that the basis of your studies is repetition. Never tired and undaunted, you will push on along the thorny path of language and when, some day, you catch yourself whispering one or two sentences in that language, even carrying on a whole imaginary conversation with yourself—then you will know that you have acquired something of the spirit of that language. You will also know that you have won the most difficult battle in your study of the language.

My Advice to the Class of '52

C. E. LEHMAN

Rhetoric II, Theme 14, 1947-48

IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TO GET TO COLLEGE, OVER seventeen extra years, in fact; so perhaps my outlook is a little broader, a little more mature than the average college student's. That is why I feel I may presume to offer a little advice to the Class of '52.

First of all, take college seriously. Have fun, develop a social life, but don't let your outside activities become more important to you than your studies. Presumably you are in college to prepare a foundation for your life work or at least for your way of living, so prepare a good, solid foundation by doing some serious study. It has often been said that college education's main purpose is to teach one to think. That may sound rather unimportant right now to you; you probably feel that you know how to think, but believe me, after fifteen years in the business world and three and one-half years in the Armed Forces, I can say with some authority that very few people can think. Most people today are guided through life not by thought but by emotions. They are not able to think their problems out. They don't know how. And as a result, the world today is in turmoil, and we are faced with problems such as the climbing divorce rate, the increase of juvenile delinquency, the weakening of the home, and mounting crime of all kinds.

Secondly, take advantage of aptitude tests, especially those of you who are undetermined as to what field of study you wish to follow. Aptitude tests were of considerable help to me in getting started on the right track, and I know they will help you, too. However, don't expect miracles. Aptitude tests are not so exact that they can tell you one precise vocation that is the only thing for you. But they can tell you in what general field your greatest interest lies, and it follows that the field of work you are most interested in will be the field of work you will most enjoy and in which you will be most successful.

Thirdly, try, if you can, to forget the importance of money, and map out your course of studies so that you will be taking the subjects that you are interested in, not the subjects that you think may result in big money after you graduate. In other words, don't major in Electrical Engineering just because you have heard that electrical engineers make lots of money, when within yourself you have always had a desire to be a teacher. You may enjoy the income of an electrical engineer for awhile, but sooner or later you will "sour" on that type of work, and the income will mean less and less to you, while the desire to do something more to your liking will become stronger and stronger. For fifteen years I followed a line of work for the money that was in it, and because my brain became more or less atrophied, I thought for some

time that my life was set. Then the war came along, and through the stimulation of changed environment and broader horizons, I began to think again, and by the time the war was over I realized that I was in the wrong business, that my interests were elsewhere, and that if I was ever going to have a full and happy life I'd better change and change fast. I found that doing what I wanted to do had become far more important than a large income. Fortunately, I was able to return to college and resume my studies. You may not be so lucky, so be sure you are preparing yourself in the right field of work for you—not for your parents, not for your friends, but for you.

College years will be happy years for you; and if you are able to follow my few pointers, I think the years that follow college days have every chance of being full and happy, too.

No Name

ROBERT FULTON

Rhetoric II, Theme 6, 1947-48

The old lady stood over the boy lying on his back in the park.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Writing," he said.

"What are you writing?" she asked.

"A criticism," he said.

"But you have no pen, no paper, no notes," she said; "and anyway, who ever heard of a boy writing a criticism on his back in the park?"

"The sky is very blue," he said.

"With what is your criticism concerned?" she asked, smiling faintly.

"I am writing a review of the book, *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* by Anatole France," he said.

"Anatole France?"

"Yes."

"Sylvestre Bonnard?"

"Yes."

"Never heard of them."

The boy turned as though listening for something.

"What sort of crime did this fellow Bonnard commit?" she asked.

"He committed no crime," he said.

"Then what did he do?" she asked.

"He was a philologist."

"A philologist?"

"Yes, a kind, patient, sympathetic old man who studied literature."

"But again, what did he do?" she asked.

"Nothing."

"He must have done something," she said.

"He loved people," he said.

"Loved people?"

"Yes, he thought people were fine and good."

"He must have been crazy," she said.

"What a beautiful day it is," he said.

"Ah—this fellow, France, did he have any purpose in writing such a book?"

"Purpose?"

"Of course; if you are going to write a review, you must explain the purpose of the book," she said.

"Well," he said, "France wanted to paint pictures, word-pictures of people, all kinds of people, so that anyone could thumb through his book and decide upon what kind of person he or she would like to be."

"That is ridiculous," she said.

"Listen to the birds," he said. "How honest they sound."

"How could he write such a book?" she asked.

"By comparison," he said.

"By comparison?"

"Yes, he had Sylvestre meet all kinds of people under all kinds of circumstances; and in that way, he made it easy for us to choose our hero."

"Who is our hero?" she asked.

"Sylvestre," he said.

"Anyone else?" she asked.

"Jeanne, a very young girl whom he befriended," he said.

"The old wolf," she said.

"Oh, no," he said laughing, "she was the daughter of Sylvestre's childhood sweetheart."

"Oh, it is a love story," she purred.

"Yes."

"A happy love story?"

"Yes."

"It speaks of death, too, doesn't it?" she said suddenly.

"But of life, too," he said.

"There is despair, hate, jealousy, and greed in this book, isn't there?"

"There is also hope, faith, love, and kindness," he said quietly.

"It must be a strange story," she said.

"It is the story of people," he said.

"Well," she said, straightening herself, "don't lie there all day, young man. Why don't you begin writing your review?"

"I have written it," he said.

China Bound---The Hard Way

WILLIAM B. HOLWICK
Rhetoric I, Theme 5, 1947-48

WITH THE FIRST TINTS OF DAWN, OUR SAMPAN LAID alongside the huge bulk of the junk that was to take us to China. As we gained the deck, our senses were numbed by the overpowering odor of fish. The fourth and last man of our party came aboard, and the Chinese captain gave orders to get underway.

The deck became a riot of organized confusion. Three sailors jumped to the hand windlass at the bow and started to heave the anchor, three others ran to the poop and lowered the rudder into place, and the remainder of the crew hoisted the sails. The rusty-red canvas sails were swung from their vertical positions and opened like enormous Oriental fans. The booms were secured, and the sails climbed the masts accompanied by the squealing of tackle and the rhythmic, grunting chant of the sailors. The breeze bulged the sails, and we gained momentum gradually. The junk began the characteristic movement of all junks, a slow, upward heave to port followed by a crashing descent to starboard.

As this was our first time aboard a junk, we roamed about satisfying our curiosity. The junk was approximately ninety feet long and thirty feet wide and drew about seven feet of water. The hull, built of overlapping boards, bore a striking resemblance to a dilapidated frame house. The bow deck swept to a point several feet higher than the main deck. The bow was blunted and high. The design caused the unusual forward motion. Two boards projecting from the bow supported the anchor tackle. Green eyes painted on each side followed the ancient custom of giving a ship eyes to see the course. The overhanging poop rose high above the rest of the junk in a sheer curve.

The rudder was a heavy, timber rectangle just under the poop. In port or when changing course abruptly, the rudder was hoisted clear of the water by tackle and lowered into a new position. The helm, located on the sloping poop, was so massive that it required two burly seamen to man it. It was useful only in varying the course ten or twenty degrees. However, there was a purpose behind this. The junk was flat-bottomed without a keel, and the heavy rudder with its limited maneuverability compensated for this.

Four stubby masts stuck into the sky. When not in use, the sails were secured to the bottom boom, swung vertical, and lashed to the masts. The canvas was stiffened by narrow strips of bamboo, called battens, sewn to it. The sails, one to a mast, were controlled by tackle secured to the boom. Small lines leading to some of the battens contrived to pull the sails to any angle necessary to catch all possible wind.

Finishing our examination topside, we descended to the holds, which extended from the bow to the leading edge of the poop. They were very capacious and filled to hatch level with loose rice.

The captain called and invited us to his quarters. We walked aft and squeezed through a tiny hatch under the poop into the crew's quarters. The odor was nauseating. The deck, the clothes, the bulkheads, and the crew reeked of fish oil. The overhead was so low that we had to creep along doubled over. The crew slept on straw mats along the bulkheads. Charcoal braziers served the dual purpose of heating and cooking. We crept on to the captain's cabin, dodging the bundles of personal possessions dangling from the supports.

Another tight squeeze and we were in the cabin. A bank of oiled paper windows greeted our eyes. Fresh air reached our noses, nausea struck us, and it was every man for himself. After staring over the window-sills at the Yellow Sea for half-an-hour, we slumped to the straw matted floor and dozed off.

We awakened at sunset. A sailor entered with a fish oil lantern and hung it from the bulkhead. For the first time, we took an interest in our surroundings. The cabin was about twenty feet long and extended the width of the junk. In one corner was a low wooden platform used as a bed; in the opposite, a Buddhist shrine. The center was occupied by a low table.

The captain entered, followed by two women carrying food. As our stomachs were very empty, we began to eat with gusto. We shoveled the food into our mouths with one hand and poured black tea down with the other. Our lieutenant started a conversation in the Oriental trade language, a corruption of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. Since all of us were reasonably fluent in the jargon, we all joined. The food was a baked concoction of rice, vegetables, and three kinds of meat. One kind was slivered white meat tasting like chicken; the next kind tasted and looked like beef; the third, juicy, tender, and pink, tasted like rabbit. I asked the captain, "What is the meat?" He answered that it was *tok*, *geh*, and *tako*. *Tok*, meaning chicken, was the white meat; *geh*, dog, was the beef; that left the pink meat, or *tako*. *What was tako?* Our interpreter leaned over and hissed, "Octopus!" Under ordinary circumstances I would have revisited the windows, but the meats were delicious, and I was hungry. The captain announced that we would reach Tsingtao about dawn. We ate our fill and turned in.

As we lay down to sleep, we chatted about the day's events. We had no doubts of reaching our destination. Maybe the junk was crude, slow, and ungainly, but the design has been unchanged for several thousand years. That meant it must have some good points. As I was lulled to sleep by the roller-coaster motion, I recalled the U. S. Army recruiting posters' slogan, "You will receive travel, education, and experience." I was certainly receiving all that, but why did it have to be the hard way?

Third Parties

ROSALYN SALTZ

Rhetoric II, Theme 3, Summer, 1948

CURRENTLY THE NEW AMERICAN THIRD PARTY, LED BY Henry Wallace, is being attacked bitterly and often irrationally by many American progressives on two grounds: (1) the third party is Communist dominated and therefore "Un-American"; (2) it is dividing American liberals who would otherwise present a solid front against the Republican Party in the November elections. It is not my purpose here to either substantiate or refute the charge of Communist influence within the third party. The second basis for attack on the present third party is probably much more important, because of its implication in regard to the attitude of American progressives toward any future third party. This attitude could, obviously, by negating the possibility of progressives' leaving the Democratic Party at any time in the future, make permanent the present alliance of progressives with Southern reactionaries and Northern machine politicians within the Democratic Party. In making this alliance permanent, the Democratic Party would become simply a huge political machine with no purpose other than that of attaining public office.

When attacking Wallace's third party on this second basis, progressives display a lack of understanding of the nature and historical role of American third parties as a means of insuring democratic expression of opinion by the American people. Historically, third parties have arisen for at least one of the following three reasons: (1) to present a third solution to a problem when many Americans could accept neither of the alternatives suggested by the major parties; (2) to dramatize issues which many Americans have considered vital and which both major parties have ignored; (3) to serve as spokesmen for advocates of an alternative solution to a particular problem when both major parties have advocated essentially the same solution to this problem. In all three capacities, third parties have merely filled the need of a segment of the American people for representation. When the views of a substantial number of American voters have not been incorporated into the policies of either of the two major parties, a third party has arisen. It should be clear then that third parties do not themselves split major parties; that is, third parties have not *caused* ruptures within major parties but have simply *resulted from* such ruptures.

The third party led by Henry Wallace falls primarily in the third of the above categories. Both the Democratic and Republican Parties advocate a "get tough" policy toward the Soviet Union. Both have accepted the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and vie with one another in verbal attacks

upon the Soviet Union. As a corollary, both advocate restraint upon Communists and "fellow-travellers" within the United States. A substantial number of American voters have been opposed to this foreign policy, believing that the present crisis is due to mistrust and fear on the part of both the United States and the Soviet Union and that our present attitude can only heighten this mistrust and fear. Henry Wallace is merely the voice of the opposition which openly arose within the Democratic Party after the pronouncement of the Truman Doctrine. He is not the cause of this opposition. Little will be gained by opposing the third party on the ground that it exists and will therefore disunite American liberals; the third party exists because American liberals have for some time been disunited in their views in regard to American foreign policy. The alternative to America's present foreign policy which Wallace presents should be accepted or rejected on the basis of its merits, and acceptance or rejection of any future third party should be decided on a similar basis. Thus, at any future time, a third party may arise when basic differences exist among the American people and when these differences are not reflected in the policies of the major parties. It would, therefore, seem that the essential criterion for accepting or rejecting any future third party should be the validity of its position on these basic differences and not the effect of the birth of the new party upon the existence of the old.

Rhet as Writ

Women should stay at home and propagate their children and husbands.

* * * *

Women are fickle. Some women go with 2 or 4 differant men at once. I know one girl who kissed good-night 8 differant boys at the same time.

* * * *

A draft like the one proposed, however, would bring a group of boys into the service with nothing but grips.

* * * *

My parents' strong shoulders became my backbone.

* * * *

Then he would turn away and shut his olfactory sense to my heated retorts.

* * * *

The day begins at 7:00 A. M. when revelry blows.

* * * *

On the other hand, it is one of life's marvelous adventures to discover hidden within you capacities qualifying you for carrying on the constructive work of insuring lives, of enabling people to guard against the hazardous uncertainties of fat and circumstance.

* * * *

An infinitive is *to* plus a *verb*. Example: He *to was* a great fighter.